



Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space



Junior Ranger Activity Guide

Welcome to the Junior Ranger Program with Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space!

Get ready to discover some of the fascinating and fun things about our regional parks. Park Rangers are the individuals who make sure our parks are preserved and protected. Junior Rangers can help! Together with an adult or friend, you can become a Junior Ranger. All you have to do is:

- Complete as many pages as your age
- Fill out the evaluation form (last page)
- Bring the evaluation to any Washoe County Park Ranger office (or mail it in to the address listed) to receive your certificate

Good luck, have fun & enjoy your regional parks!

For a complete listing of our regional parks and their locations, please visit www.washoecountyparks.com. As you complete the activities in this guide, please observe and enjoy nature in its own environment. Take only photographs and make sketches as souvenirs! Please practice the 'Leave No Trace' principles while visiting the parks.

Leave No Trace Principles:

- 1.) Plan ahead and prepare. Pay attention to the weather & wear appropriate attire. Carry water, first aid supplies, etc.
- 2.) Stay on designated trails.
- 3.) Dispose of waste properly.
- 4.) Leave what you find and respect wildlife.
- 5.) Be considerate of other park visitors.



The Washoe County Park Ranger Staff



Outdoor Safety

(Be Prepared!)



To have a safe, enjoyable outdoor experience, and help reduce search and rescue efforts, you need to be prepared. One of the most important things you can do is to always bring water and wear the right clothes. Always tell someone where you are going, how long you will be gone, what you will be doing and when you will be back.

Get Thinking and Planning

➔ Circle the correct answer(s); there can be more than one right answer.

You are planning a day hike. You should bring:

- a. a bottle of water
- b. a tent
- c. a snack to eat
- d. a radio with headphones

When you pick a jacket to wear hiking, it should be:

- a. camouflaged
- b. pink
- c. a bright color to be easily seen
- d. hooded to keep your head warm

You should always keep these things in your day hike backpack:

- a. a whistle
- b. a pack of soda
- c. a shiny lid to reflect sunlight
- d. a trash bag to use as a raincoat

It is always best to hike, ride or sled:

- a. just before dark
- b. in a marked area
- c. with a friend or adult you know
- d. alone so you can enjoy the quiet

If you get lost, you should:

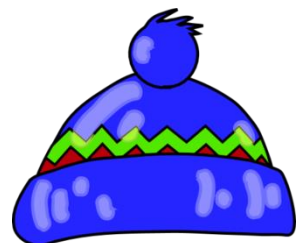
- a. stay in one place
- b. start a fire
- c. turn around and try to find the way back
- d. blow a whistle every once in a while

When you are going outside in the winter, you should wear:

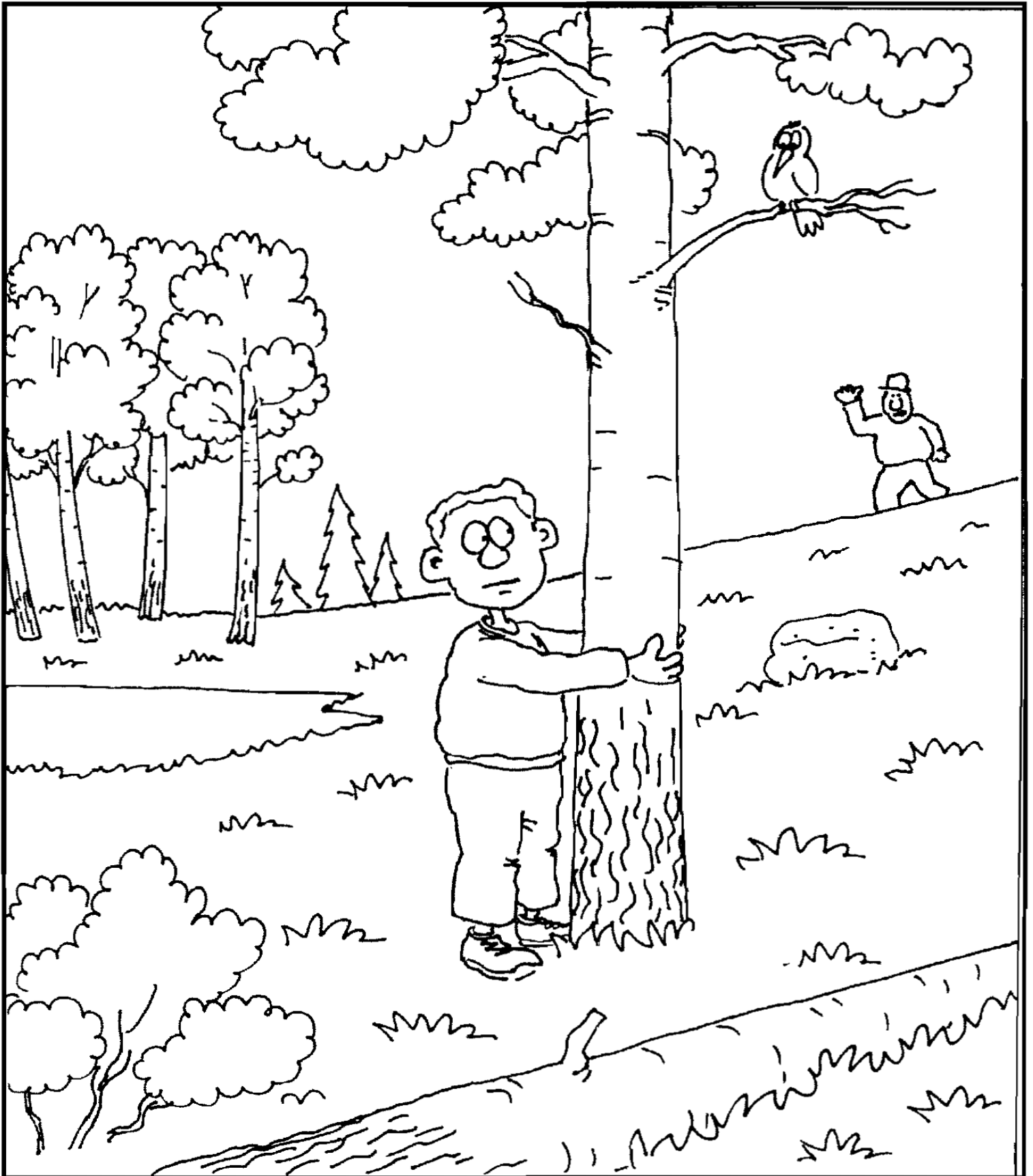
- a. a hat and sunglasses
- b. sunscreen
- c. boots and gloves
- d. clothes in layers

When hiking in a group, each person should:

- a. go a different way
- b. stay together
- c. have a map
- d. have their own daypack



**If you ever get lost, stay put (hug a tree) and wait for help.
Make a noise that others can hear. You won't get in trouble!
(Color this page and share it with a friend)**



My Nature Journal

Today's Date is _____

The weather today is _____ (example: sunny, cloudy, rainy, snowing)

The temperature is _____ F

The season is _____

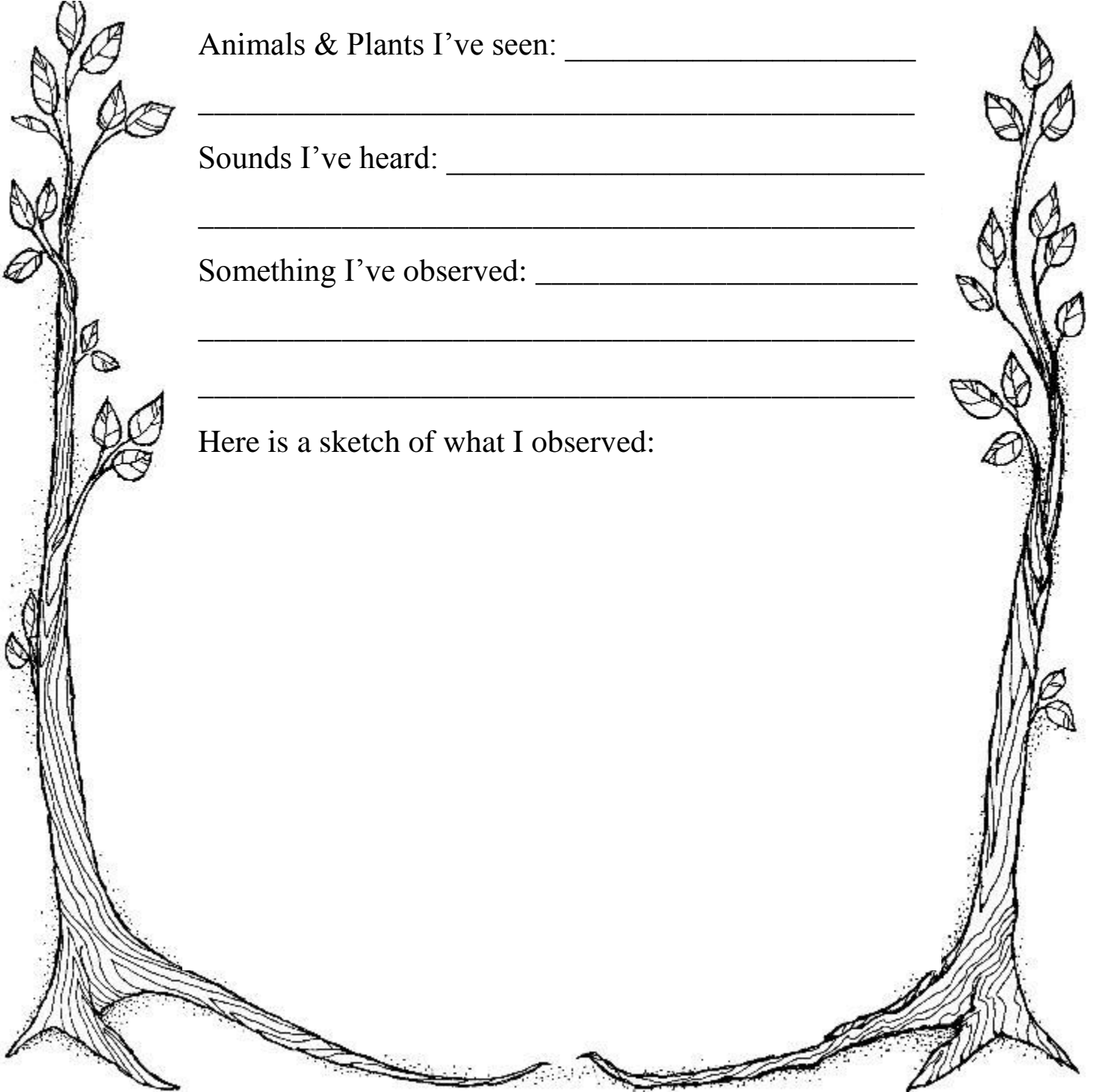
I am at the _____ (Name of park).

Animals & Plants I've seen: _____

Sounds I've heard: _____

Something I've observed: _____

Here is a sketch of what I observed:



Outdoor Activities

Every park has something different and special you can do on your visit. Look at the list below of activities and match the appropriate icon to the activity. **Circle the activities in which you have participated today. For each circled item, write where you participated in that activity.**

<u>Icon</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Where you Participated</u>
	Snowshoeing	_____
	Fishing	_____
	Hiking	_____
	Picnicking	_____
	Sledding	_____
	Wildlife Viewing	_____
	Dog Walking	_____
	Cross Country Skiing	_____
	Meet a Park Ranger	_____

Meet a Park Ranger

Park Rangers work around the world and do many different jobs. All Park Rangers have similar goals however; from protecting plants, animals and other resources to helping park visitors enjoy their visit. **Interview a Ranger at the park you are visiting.**



Date of Interview: _____

Location of Interview: _____

Name of Park Ranger: _____

How many years has the Park Ranger worked in the field? _____

How did the Park Ranger prepare for the job? _____

What does the Park Ranger like about his/her job? _____

What is the hardest part of their job? _____

What is one thing that the Park Ranger does regularly? _____

What is the Park Rangers favorite wild animal in the park? _____

What is one thing the Ranger would like you to learn from this interview?

Wild Treasures

Parks are home to many different species of trees, birds, shrubs, animals and more. Many of these species are in need of protection. **See if you can find the names of the diverse treasures in the search below.**

N	J	B	I	T	T	E	R	B	R	U	S	H	D	X
J	U	N	I	P	E	R	N	D	O	F	K	J	H	F
C	B	G	S	A	G	E	B	R	U	S	H	Y	V	Y
H	L	M	W	H	I	T	E	F	I	R	P	O	X	R
I	A	C	S	I	E	L	D	E	R	B	E	R	R	Y
C	C	D	H	C	W	O	O	D	P	E	C	K	E	R
K	K	Q	U	A	K	I	N	G	A	S	P	E	N	R
A	B	S	T	E	L	L	E	R	S	J	A	Y	K	A
D	E	Z	M	A	N	Z	A	N	I	T	A	M	J	G
E	A	J	E	F	F	R	E	Y	P	I	N	E	L	S
E	R	S	T	E	G	L	M	U	L	E	D	E	E	R
R	E	D	T	A	I	L	E	D	H	A	W	K	T	Y
P	V	R	A	I	N	B	O	W	T	R	O	U	T	M
J	I	K	S	Q	U	I	R	R	E	L	W	K	T	Z
M	H	I	C	O	T	T	O	N	T	A	I	L	G	I

1. Sagebrush

2. Cottontail

3. Elderberry

4. Mule Deer

5. Chickadee

6. Rainbow Trout

7. Jeffrey Pine

8. Quaking Aspen

9. Manzanita

10. Woodpecker

11. Squirrel

12. Bitterbrush

13. Red-tailed Hawk

14. Black Bear

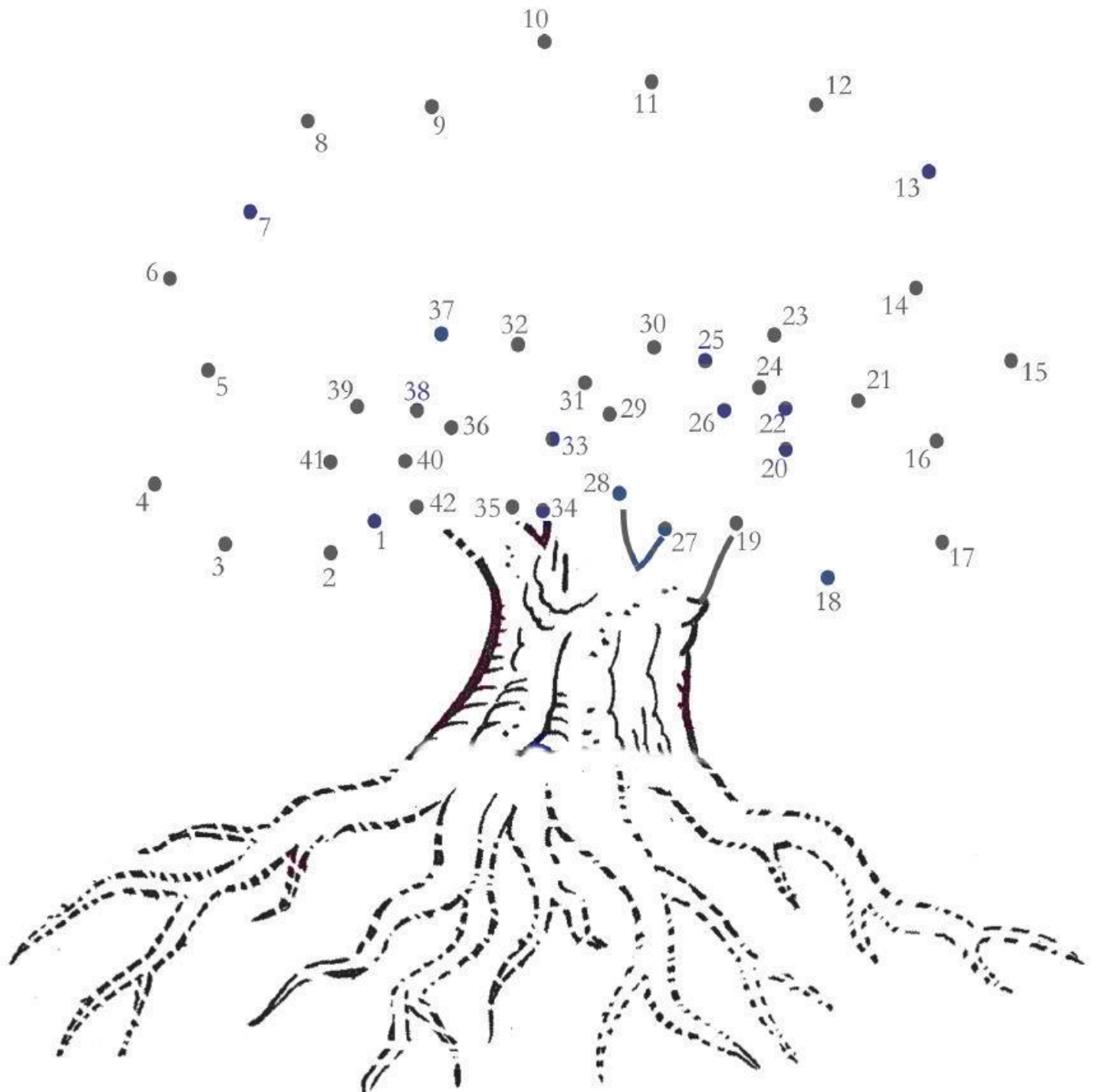
15. Steller's Jay

16. White Fir

17. Juniper

Tree Factory

A tree has different parts that make food and help it grow. LEAVES use sunlight to make food for the tree. BRANCHES hold the leaves up to the sun. The TRUNK holds the tree nice and tall. ROOTS get water and nutrients from the soil and hold the tree up. **Connect the dots to complete this drawing of the tree. Draw a yellow sun, blue rain water and brown soil. Then color in the tree and all its parts.**



Legends of the Bear

Nevada's forested areas are good black bear habitat! Black bears are very shy and range between 4-5 feet long, weighing 150 – 400 lbs. Did you know that not all black bears are black? Many times they are brown, blonde, reddish or cinnamon colored. In the winter, they hibernate in dens made up of a hollow in the ground or under the roots of a fallen tree. Black bears are omnivorous, feeding on a wide range of foods including plants and berries.

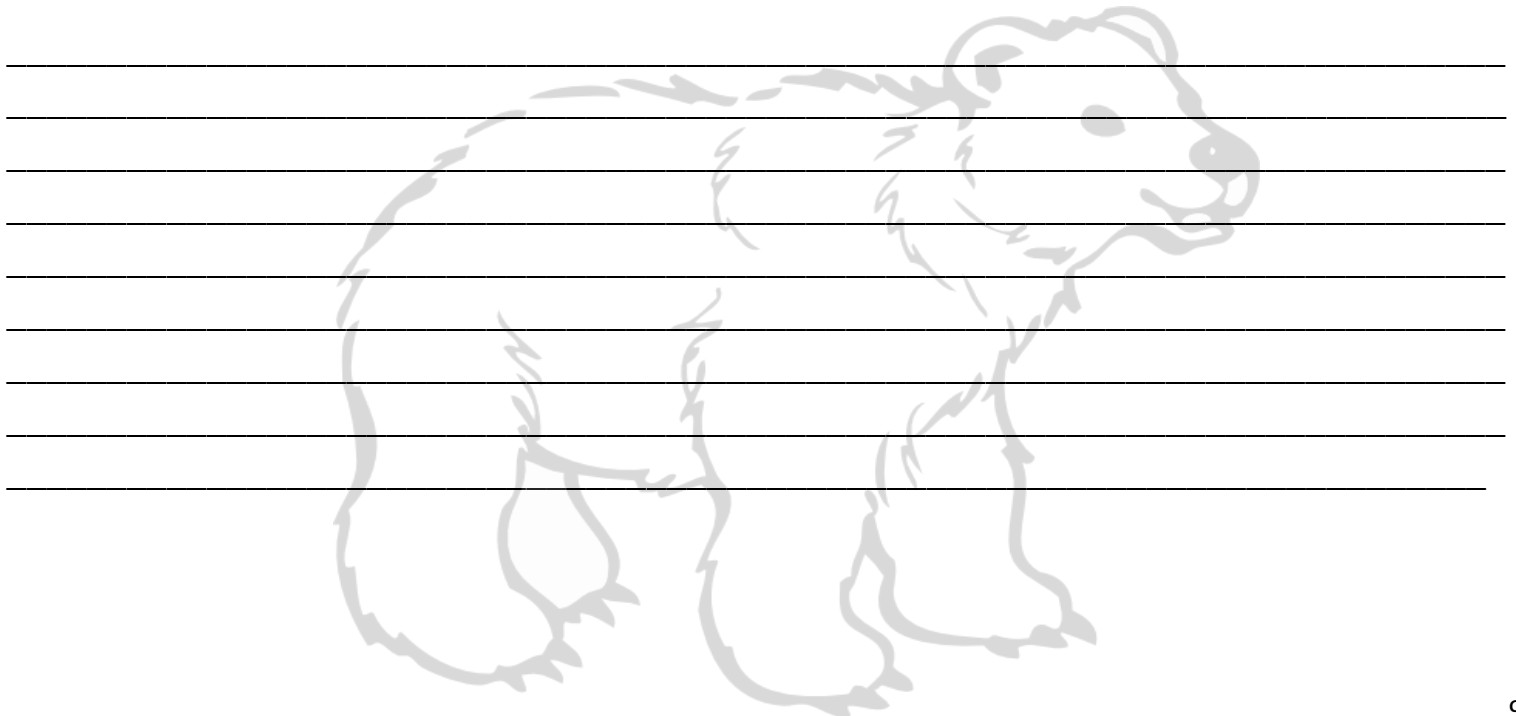
Read the story and create your own legend of the bear. Try to use a different feature of the bear other than the tail. You can write about hibernating, eating plants/berries, how shy the bear is, why they are so large, and more!

The Loucheux people tell this wonderful legend of how the bear got such a short, stubby tail.

The bear once had a long, furry tail. Then he asked the fox how to catch crayfish. The tricky fox told the bear to hang his long tail in the water through a hole in the ice until the crayfish pinched it. Then he could pull them up on his tail.

The bear did as the fox told him, but when he felt a pinch on his tail, it was the ice freezing around it. When he finally tried to pull his tail out, it was frozen hard into the ice! The bear yanked hard and broke his tail off near the base – and has had a short tail ever since.

Now create your own fascinating legend.



Whose Tracks Are Those?

Regional Parks are special places where plants and animals are protected. The ponds, forests, wetlands and fields within the parks are home to many species of wildlife.

Can you match the animal with the tracks it made?



Mallard



Raccoon



Mule Deer



Bald Eagle



Beaver



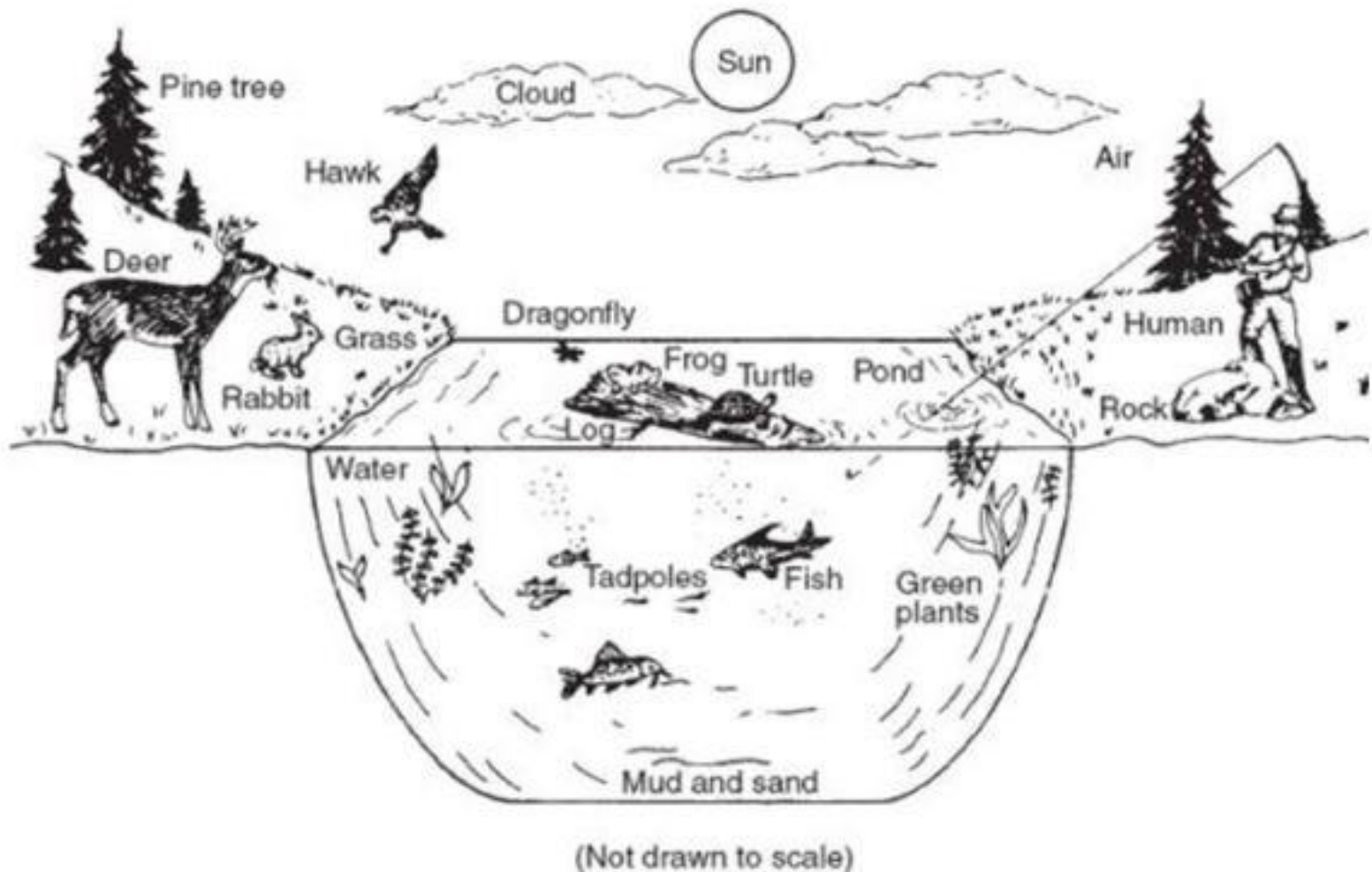
Black Bear



How many of these tracks can you find in the park?

Making the Connection

Much like the neighborhoods where you live, ecosystems are communities of plants, micro-organisms like bacteria, and animals that depend on each other and their environment.



- Humans and hawks _____ fish. They are examples of consumers.
(eat or are eaten by)
- Grass and _____ make their own food. They are examples of producers.
- Bugs and bacteria eat dead plants and animals to put nutrients back into the soil. They are examples of decomposers.
- **Circle all of the *producers* and put triangles around the *consumers* in the diagram above.**
- If there were no grass or green plants, what might happen to the hawk population?

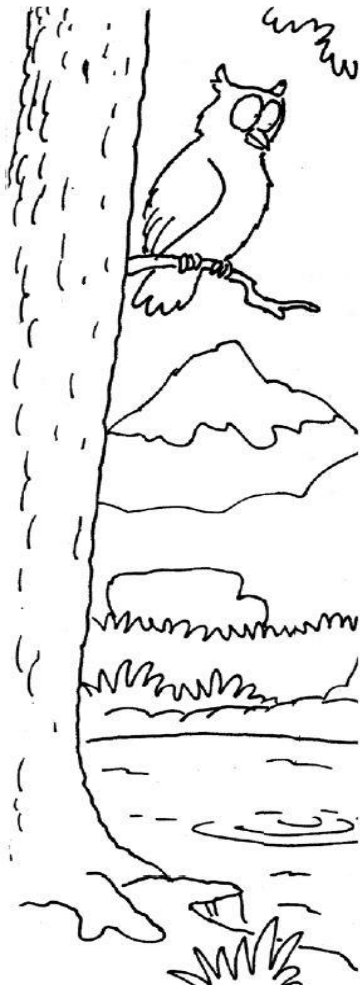
Take a Closer Look

As you walk, hike or ride through the park it is easy to forget to take a closer look around. Going on a scavenger hunt can help you observe many small details that you might otherwise miss. Get ready to start searching!

Let's see how many of these items you can find. **Put an X next to each item you find**, but remember ... collecting items is not allowed. Make sure you do not disturb or destroy any of the plants, animals or their homes. **Feel free to draw 2 of the items you found as well.**

- ☐ A feather
- ☐ Exactly 10 of something
- ☐ Two different textures
- ☐ A thorn, sticker or barb
- ☐ A cloud in the sky
- ☐ Something that is human-made
- ☐ Signs left by an insect
- ☐ 3 pieces of litter to throw away
- ☐ Something that is growing
- ☐ A source of water
- ☐ An animal track
- ☐ A sign of erosion
- ☐ Something that is decaying
- ☐ Something round
- ☐ Something heavy
- ☐ A pinecone





Habits and Habitats: Park Animal Survey

Observe a living creature in the park and answer the following questions. (If you aren't able to find one, then invent one). Think about how your creature moves, eats and protects itself.

My park creature is a _____

My creature looks like this:

My creature likes to eat _____

My creature finds food in this part of the park (fields, trees, ground, shrubs, etc.)

My creature makes its home in this part of the park (fields, trees, ground, shrubs, etc.)

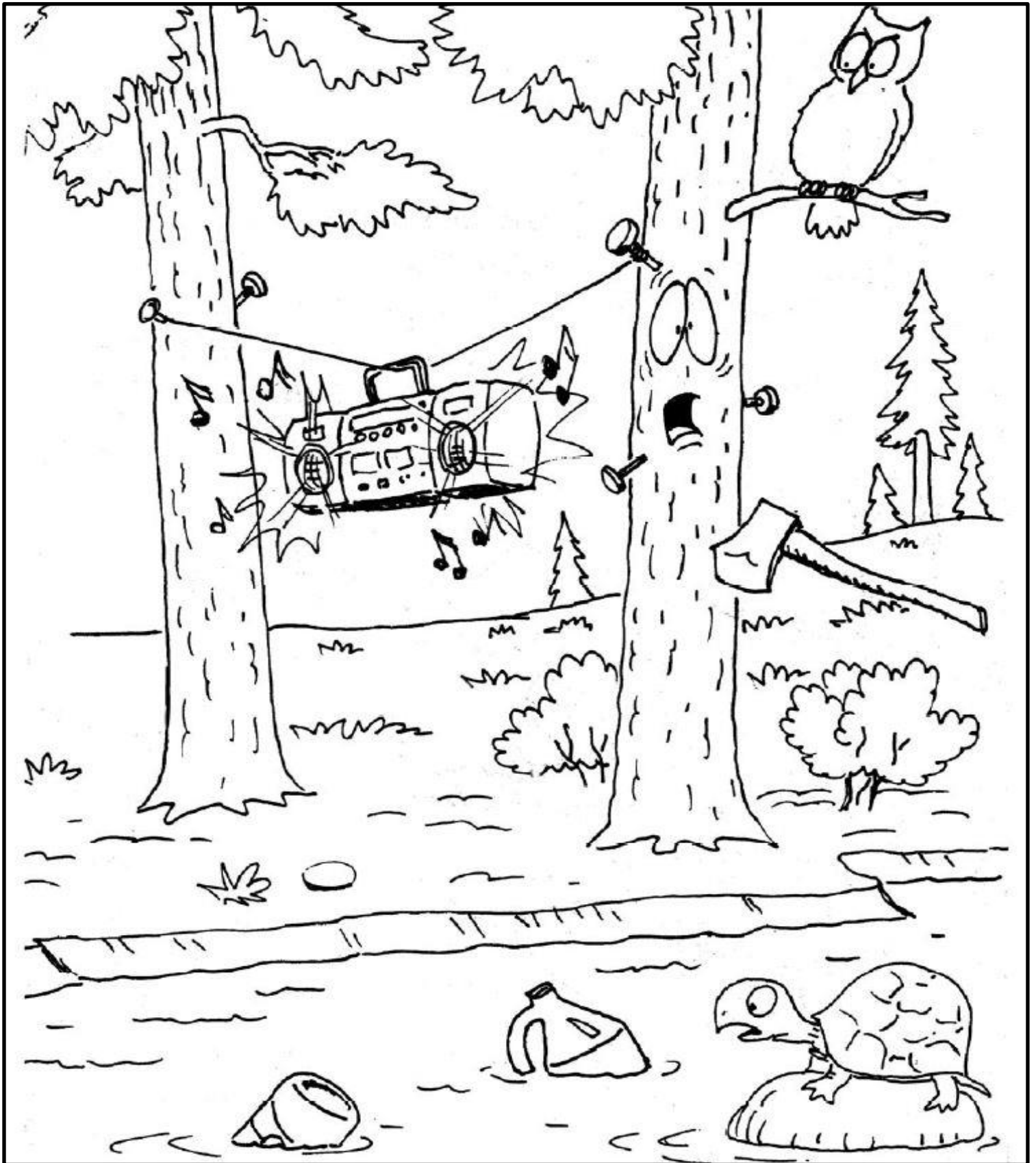
Other creatures that prey upon (hunt and eat) my creature include:

In winter, my creature (migrates, remains active in the park, hibernates)

Here are signs that my creature has been around (nest, tracks, nibblings, resting spots, rub marks, holes in trees, scat, hair, feathers, other)

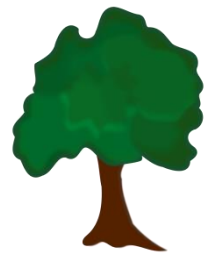
**Please respect nature and each other. Leave no trace, pack out
your trash and enjoy the quiet!**

(Circle the things you *shouldn't* do in the outdoors. Then color the page.)





Biomass



Fill in the blanks with the words in the box at the bottom of the page. Use each word only once.

1. Biomass is any _____ that was alive a short time ago.
2. Biomass is a _____ energy source, because we can always grow more plants.
3. We _____ most biomass to make heat.
4. We burn garbage in a _____ plant to make _____.
5. When biomass rots, it forms a _____ called _____ that we can use for energy.
6. Biomass can be turned into a liquid fuel like gasoline called _____.
7. Most of the biomass we use is _____.
8. Plants _____ energy from the sun in their roots and leaves.

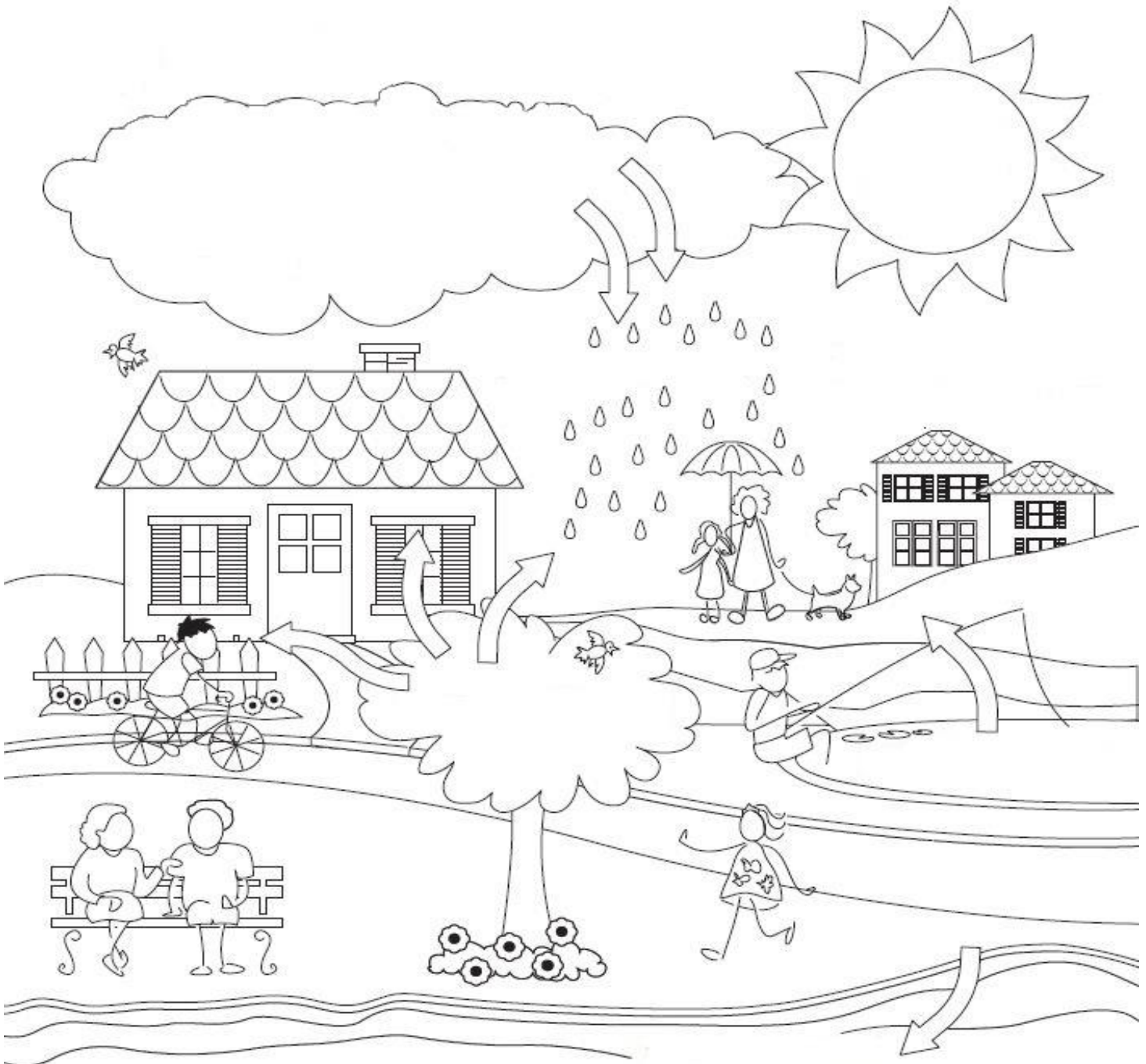
renewable	ethanol	methane	wood	store
electricity	material	burn	gas	waste-to-energy

Water Everywhere!

Parks help clean and preserve drinking water. Drinking water comes from mountains, lakes, rivers, streams or under the ground (ground water).

(Label and color the stages of the water cycle using the following words)

Precipitation (Rain) Percolation (Aquifer)
Evaporation (from Ponds) Transpiration (from Trees)

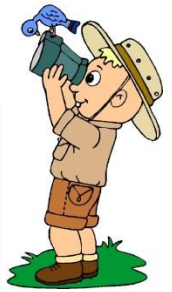


Alphabet of Natural Objects


























As you visit the parks, look for plants, animals, trees, insects, birds, weather and other natural things that begin with the letters in the upper left corner of each box. Draw (or write the name) of each object you found in the appropriate box.

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J/K	L	M
N	O	P/Q	R
S	T/U	V/W	X/Y/Z

Scavenger Hunt Bingo



Find these animals, insects, plants and natural objects while visiting the park. When you find one, mark the space with an X. Get BINGO when you complete a line of X's.

B	I	N	G	O
Spider web 	Flying bird 	Hole in a tree 	Squirrel 	Berries on a plant 
Oak Leaf 	Blooming flower 	Perching bird 	Spider 	Sun 
Frog 	Crawling insect 	Free 	Tall grasses 	Callail 
Moss 	Fungus 	Worm 	Bird singing 	Rocks 
Fish swimming 	Animal home 	Clouds 	Pine tree 	Acorn 

Oh the Places You'll Go!

Preparing and planning for a trip includes researching where to go and possible routes, bringing the necessary equipment and knowing how to use it, checking the weather forecast and telling someone where you're going and when you expect to be back.

Fill out a trip plan for your next trip in the outdoors and share it with your family:

Start (day of week, date, time) _____

Intended Return (day of week, date, time) _____

Purpose of trip (day hike, camping trip, skiing, etc.) _____

Destination: _____

Plan A – Intended route in:

Intended route out:

Plan B – Alternative route in:

Alternative route out:

Weather forecast: _____

Vehicle, license #, make/model: _____

Equipment/supplies taken:

Number in group and who:

Junior Ranger Guide Evaluation Form

Please take a few moments to fill out this form and give it to a Washoe County Park Ranger. Or mail it in to: Nick Steuer, 6000 Bartley Ranch Rd., Reno, NV 89511, email: nsteuer@washoecounty.us

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

E-mail: _____ Age: _____

School Name: _____

My favorite page was: _____ because _____

_____.

The thing I liked most about this guide is: _____

_____.

The thing I liked least about this guide is: _____

_____.

Parent/Family Member/Friend (adult), please sign here:

I certify that _____ completed the number of
pages matching his/her age.

Signed _____
(name of the adult)